

# 2015 INDIANA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX





## ABOUT THE PARTNERS

### INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

Indiana University Northwest is a regional campus of Indiana University, serving more than 6,000 students from the state's most diverse and industrialized region. IU Northwest's mission is to provide a high-quality and relevant education to the citizens of Northwest Indiana. The institution strives to create a community dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and intellectual development, leading to undergraduate and selected graduate degrees in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional disciplines. The campus is strongly dedicated to the value of education, lifelong learning, diversity, celebration of cultures and opportunity for all, as well as to participating in the sustainable economic development of the region and of the state. Indiana University Northwest is committed to the health and well-being of the communities it serves.

### INDIANA BAR FOUNDATION

Attorneys and judges of the Indiana Bar Foundation are committed to strengthening access to justice and increasing education about the rule of law. The Foundation serves the public with various educational and scholarship programs about the U.S. Constitution, American history, the legal system and the judicial process. This includes We the People, Indiana High School Mock Trial, and the U.S. Senate Youth Program. It also aids those Hoosiers in need by funding 12 pro bono programs and other legal aid serving persons in poverty seeking legal assistance and advice. More information available at [www.inbf.org](http://www.inbf.org).

### IU CENTER FOR CIVIC LITERACY

The Indiana University Center for Civic Literacy (the Center) is a multi-disciplinary research center established to examine the causes and consequences of Americans' low levels of civic knowledge. The Center's mission is to increase public understanding of the dimensions of our civic deficit and the effect of that deficit upon personal efficacy, civil liberties and democratic engagement. The Center has established a web-based clearinghouse, a newsletter and an interdisciplinary academic journal focused on civics research, and has assembled a National Advisory Committee populated by distinguished scholars of civics and civic education from around the country.

### THE CENTER ON CONGRESS - INDIANA UNIVERSITY

The Center on Congress was established in January 1999. It developed out of Lee Hamilton's recognition during his time in the U.S. House of Representatives that the public should be more familiar with Congress' strengths and weaknesses, its role in our system of government, and its impact on the lives of ordinary people every day. The Center seeks to inspire young people and adults to take an active part in revitalizing representative government in America. To that end, the Center offers multiple resources, programs, and projects that foster an informed electorate that understands our system of government and participates in civic life.

### INDIANA SUPREME COURT

The Indiana Supreme Court is the highest appellate court in the state and the court of last resort on the interpretation of Indiana's laws, its constitution, and the safeguards expressed in the state's bill of rights. In addition to deciding cases, the court establishes procedures for all trial courts in the state and sets the standards of conduct for Indiana attorneys and judges. The Indiana Supreme Court is asked to consider about 1000 cases each year. It issues opinions in about 100 cases a year. The Court also oversees a number of agencies including the Board of Law Examiners, Clerk of Appellate Courts, Division of Supreme Court Administration, Commission for Continuing Legal Education, Division of State Court Administration, Indiana Judicial Center, Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program and the Disciplinary Commission.

### NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to strengthening civic life in America. We pursue our mission through a nationwide network of partners involved in a cutting-edge civic health initiative, an innovative national service project, and our cross-sector conferences. At the core of our joint efforts is the belief that every person has the ability to help their community and country thrive.





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# INDIANA CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

## Foreword

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The American experiment is a testament to a diverse group of people working together through our many voluntary associations, religious assemblies, political parties, and other groups to make our communities, cities, states, and ultimately our country a better place for everyone. It is this “civic fabric” that holds our country together and makes it strong. Civic involvement does not simply happen, however. It takes each generation to demonstrate and teach future generations what it is to be an active, engaged, and enlightened citizen.

This approach to the American experiment in democracy has succeeded only because so many people over so many generations decided to become engaged on matters of common interest. They studied current events and participated in debate on matters great and small, from the town hall to the national capital. We believe that America will be a stronger nation with a brighter future if the country’s institutions and its practices encourage the robust civic involvement that has served us so well for so long.

This second edition of the Indiana Civic Health Index seeks to once again measure how we are doing on this score. In this latest “report card” we are able to analyze some of the trends that begin to take shape over a period of analysis. Some of these trends are positive and things on which Hoosiers can continue to build, while others are cause for concern and areas we need to improve. We hope that by identifying these trends in how Hoosiers are performing our civic duty we will produce further debate and action on building civic engagement in the future.



**Lee H. Hamilton**

*Former U.S. Representative  
Director, Center on Congress  
at Indiana University*



**Randall T. Shepard**

*Former Chief Justice,  
Indiana Supreme Court*

## Executive Summary

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A community with strong civic health is more resilient, is more effectively governed, and is a better place to live.<sup>1</sup> Our civic health increases both our individual and collective well-being. Today, Indiana is well poised to build on its community strengths to move the state forward to achieving high marks in all areas of civic health – volunteering, voting, social connectedness, group participation, and confidence in public institutions. High levels of civic participation can be realized in our urban, suburban, and rural communities. We know this because they all currently contribute in unique ways to Indiana’s civic health.

When we recognize the contributions of all Hoosiers to our overall civic health we have the opportunity to develop the depth and breadth of civic action in the state that will lead to stronger communities. The data in this report reveal that education is central to resilient, well-governed, and better communities. We see that investing in education, including civic education, leads to higher levels of civic participation for virtually all indicators of civic health. Our challenge will be to devise ways to improve our civic health, build on our unique strengths and interests, and recognize the value of education to building strong communities. This report is an important step in the process.

# INTRODUCTION

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A look at our civic health is a look at our public life – how we interact with one another, with our communities, and with our government.<sup>2</sup> The original Indiana Civic Health index was published in 2011. Four years later, the publication of this second edition signals an important commitment to continuing the conversation regarding our attitudes and actions in the civic arena. This edition of the civic health index also explores more deeply the impediments to civic participation and the resources that can be harnessed to further strengthen our civic commitments. We intend for the data in this second edition to further a civic conversation among citizens and community leaders that will lead to engagement that improves our individual lives and our communities.<sup>3</sup>

## What is Civic Health?

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Civic health is a measure of how actively citizens engage in their communities. As with an individual's physical health, a societal checkup is needed from time to time to make sure all systems are operating as expected and to identify problem areas. Vibrant communities are the result of actively engaged citizens; the greater the level of engagement, the better our civic health. The overall well-being of our communities and our state is higher when citizens actively participate in ways that contribute to our civic health.

Of course, there are many different communities throughout Indiana and many ways to be “actively engaged.” Surely volunteering, staying informed about current events, and voting are among some of the important ways we can be engaged. Other activities such as running for office, interacting with neighbors, and attending a religious service are also important and can provide us with indicators of how involved individuals are with their communities.

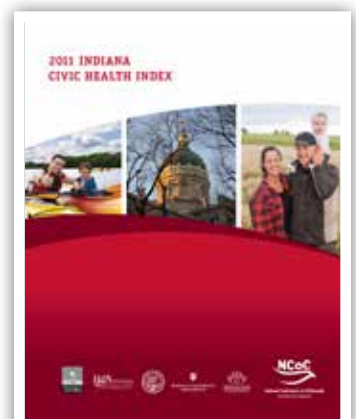
There are some measures of civic health at which Hoosiers do better than the average American. There is also room for improvement in other aspects of our civic lives. We are taking on the challenge of improving the civic well-being of our communities and our state, knowing that our social and economic well-being depend on an engaged and informed citizenry. Engaged citizens are the foundation of a well-functioning democracy. They get involved. They understand the world around them. They care about their communities and work to improve the world around them.

Stronger communities are better able to meet the social and economic needs of their citizens.

*A community with strong civic health is more resilient when hardship hits, has more effective governance, and is a better place to live. A low level of civic health can lead to dysfunctions in communities that make it harder to address pressing public problems.<sup>4</sup>*

Unemployment, for example, is a pressing economic concern in many states and localities. In a recent study, it was shown that states and localities with more civic engagement saw less growth in unemployment over the 2006 to 2010 period.<sup>5</sup> One indicator of civic engagement is working with our neighbors to address community issues. In Indiana, during the 2006 to 2010 period, approximately 6% of Hoosiers worked with neighbors to address community issues – a relatively low rate of participation compared to other states. During the same period, the change in unemployment ranged from 4% to 6%. However, in other states, where rates of participation in civic activities were higher, unemployment rates were lower.<sup>6</sup> The National Conference on Citizenship has determined that an increase of one percentage point in the state's rate of working with neighbors is associated with a one-fourth percentage point decrease in the unemployment rate.<sup>7</sup>

Our understanding of the relationship between our civic and economic health is improving. Studies such as the one mentioned above point to the importance of examining our civic health not only for purpose of building a better democracy, but also for building better, more resilient communities.



Following the first Indiana Civic Health Index in 2011, this report signals an important commitment to continuing the conversation regarding our attitudes and actions in the civic arena.



## ECONOMIC REALITIES

Almost 200 years ago, in 1816, Indiana became the 19th state in the Union. The “Crossroads of America” has changed significantly since that time. The 1900 census reported a population of approximately 2.5 million people. Today, Indiana’s population exceeds 6.5 million residents.<sup>8</sup> We have grown in number, and where we live also changed - we have become more urbanized.

In the early 1800s, Indiana’s economic well-being was centered on agricultural activities. In 1900, almost 66% of all Hoosiers lived in rural areas. In 2000, just 29.2% of the population lived in rural Indiana. While the percentage of the population engaged in the farm industry today is low (1.7%), Indiana’s farms remain an important contributor to our economic viability. Today, approximately three quarters of Indiana’s land is being farmed. A large percentage of this land is used to grow grain crops that also support other agricultural sectors such as the livestock and dairy industries.

Manufacturing, however, is the largest sector of the state’s economy. At the turn of the 20th century, Indiana’s manufacturing sector grew rapidly, becoming the world’s primary source of materials, such as steel and iron, for the industrial economy. Today, we remain a global competitor in key manufacturing sectors. In support of our manufacturing sector, the northwest corner of Indiana is one of the most heavily traveled areas in the world, supporting the movement of products and materials in domestic and global markets. It is also one of the most densely populated areas of the state.

Approximately 72% of all Hoosiers now live in urban and suburban communities. The populations in each of these areas – rural, suburban and urban - are diverse in their patterns of participation in civic life. However, they all demonstrate areas of strong commitment to one form or another of civic engagement.<sup>9</sup> Throughout this report we will highlight the unique commitments made by citizens living in our rural, suburban, and urban communities.



Photo provided by Indiana University

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community involvement is a broad indicator of civic health. There are many ways for Hoosiers to participate in their communities, whether they are rural, urban, or suburban. Some of the ways to engage in civic life include joining an organization, volunteering, and developing social connectedness that comes from spending time with family and neighbors. Our engagement in civic life says something about our sense of community.



Photo provided by the Corporation for National & Community Service

## GROUP ASSOCIATIONS

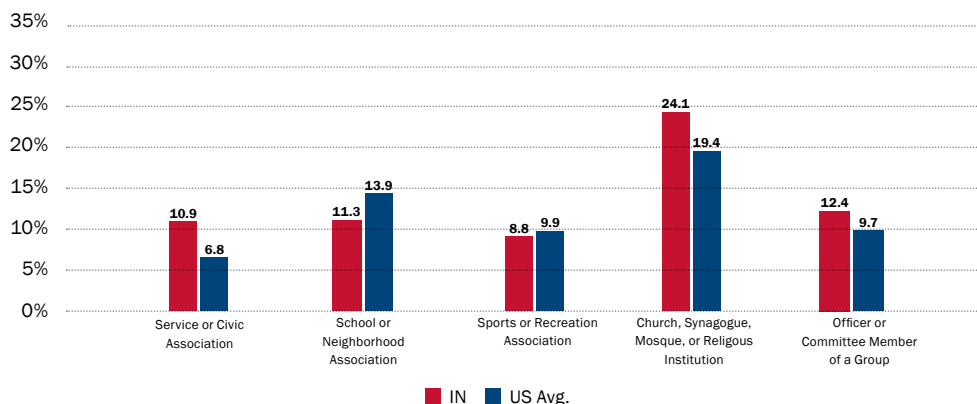
In all types of communities – urban, suburban, and rural -- Hoosiers participate in groups as a form of civic engagement. In 2013, Indiana ranked 20th among all states in the percentage of individuals participating in group associations. This is a significant improvement over its 2011 ranking of 40th among all states. Over one-third of all Hoosiers participate in at least one group regardless of where they live. They are, on average, more likely than other Americans to be part of a civic or service organization and participate in activities with religious institutions. Those living in rural areas have slightly higher rates of participation in service or civic associations than those in urban areas, while urban dwellers participate at higher rates (17.5%) than rural residents (10.4%) in school, neighborhood, or community associations.

If we look at participation over time we see that Hoosiers, over the past three years, have increasingly engaged in service and civic associations (rates grew from 9.7% in 2010 to 10.9% in 2013), and sports and recreation associations (growing from 7.2% to 8.8%). In addition, Hoosiers are increasingly assuming leadership positions. Between 2010 and 2013, the percentage of Hoosiers holding an officer/committee position grew from 9.1% to 12.4%. However, Indiana's participation in school, neighborhood, and community associations has decreased from a rate of 14.1% in 2010 to 11.3% in 2013, moving the state from a rank of 41st to 44th nationally. So, while we are increasingly involved in our community through our group associations, overall, our state-level participation in school, community, and neighborhood associations is, in fact, declining.

# 17.5%

of urban Hoosiers participate in school, neighborhood, and community associations compared to 10.4% of rural residents.

**Chart 1. Group Association in Indiana vs. US Averages**



## VOLUNTEERING

In addition to being members of an organization, Hoosiers donate their time and talents to a wide array of organizations. Volunteers provide services in many areas, including hospitals, religious organizations, schools, homeless shelters, and food banks.<sup>10</sup> In 2013, 26.9% of Hoosiers participated in a volunteer activity, moving the state from a rank of 32nd in 2010 to a rank of 26th in 2013. Indiana's rate of volunteering is now higher than the national average of 25.4%. Suburban residents have the highest rate of volunteering, reporting a volunteering rate of 30.1%. Approximately 24% of urban and rural residents donate their time and talent to volunteer activities.

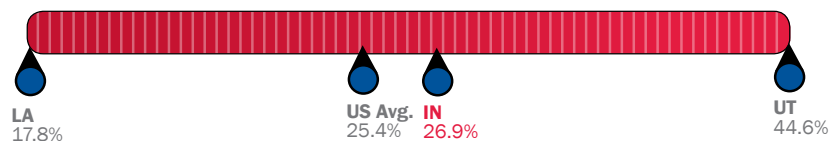
At the state level, there are a number of initiatives underway that are aimed at promoting volunteerism. In 2005, Indiana created the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI). The OFBCI provides information, training, technical assistance, and limited grant funding to both community-based and faith-based organizations that work to make Indiana a better place to live for all citizens.<sup>11</sup> In January of 2013, the OFBCI was tasked with connecting the varied forms of community organizations. The office lays the foundation for future efforts in its *Good to Great* plan. The plan asserts that, by pulling together a network of faith-based and community-based organizations, additional community support will be realized. The network would include newly created regional Hoosier Support Centers that support volunteerism and community service initiatives all across the state.

To strengthen and improve the volunteer service infrastructure, the OFBCI will be providing technical assistance, education, information, and other resources to the volunteer community.

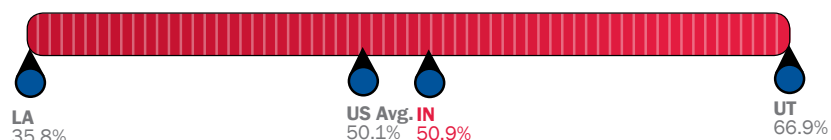
Such support will be helpful at the local level, where Hoosiers were less inclined in 2013 than they were in 2010 to work with their neighbors to fix or improve something in the community.

The rate at which Hoosiers work together in their communities to solve issues or undertake improvements is below that of other states. In fact, Indiana is one of the lowest ranked states in this form of civic engagement. Our ranking has fallen over the past three years from 45th in the nation in 2010 (6.5% rate) to 47th in the nation in 2013 (5.6% rate) in this category. It should be noted that Hoosiers living in urban areas are more likely to work with their neighbors to fix or improve the community than those in suburban or rural areas. Their rate of participation (6.6%) also exceeds the state rate (5.6%) of participation. Urban residents also outperform the state average as well as suburban and rural residents in public meeting attendance. Almost twice the percentage of urban residents (8.5%) as compared to rural residents (4.6%) attended public meetings. Public meetings are an important way to learn about our government and to express our views. Our commitment to philanthropy, on the other hand, was embraced by an increasing number of Hoosiers. Close to 51% of all Hoosiers in 2013 made charitable gifts of at least twenty-five dollars.

### VOLUNTEERING IN INDIANA



### CHARITABLE GIVING (\$25 OR MORE)



# 26th

Indiana ranks 26th in volunteer activity at 26.9%, slightly above the national average.



## SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

One indicator of civic health where Indiana excelled relates to family interactions. We are deeply connected with our families, as is evidenced by the percentage of Hoosiers who said they eat dinner with their family a few times a week or more. Almost 93% of Hoosiers are connected to their families in this way. The national estimate for this indicator was 87.8% in 2013. In addition, over the course of the past three years, Indiana's rank improved from 17th to 3rd. Our current rank of 3rd in the nation demonstrates Indiana's strong commitment to social connectivity through our family relationships.

Our connection with our families, combined with involvement in community organizations in 2013, further supports the 2010 assertion that Hoosiers are committed to engaging with their communities. However, other 2013 indicators also suggest there is room for significant improvement in the way that Hoosiers conduct our civic business. As mentioned above, Hoosiers are among the lowest ranked in working with neighbors to solve community problems.

Our state also is ranked low in participation in school, community, and neighborhood associations. While we are more connected with our families and select groups than other states, the connection to community organizations and to our neighbors could be significantly strengthened. This is a consistent trend over the past three years and suggests that a better understanding of our neighborhood connections, or lack thereof, could reveal some important information regarding our civic lives.

### SEE OR HEAR FROM FAMILY OR FRIENDS FREQUENTLY

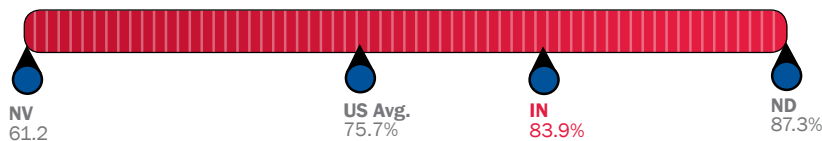


Photo provided by Indiana University

## VOTER REGISTRATION AND TURNOUT

In the 2012 Presidential Election, Indiana ranked 38th in voter turnout among eligible citizens (U.S. citizens aged 18 and over) with a rate of 59.3%. The national turnout rate was 61.8% that year. Indiana performed even more poorly in the recent midterm elections. According to the United States Elections Project, in the 2014 midterm election, Indiana ranked last in the nation with only 27.8% of the voting-eligible population participating. The national turnout rate in 2014 was 35.9%.<sup>12</sup> In 2010, the previous midterm election year, the national turnout rate was 45.5% for all citizens aged 18 and older. Indiana's voter turnout in 2010 was 39.4%, six percentage points lower than the national average, ranking the state 48th.

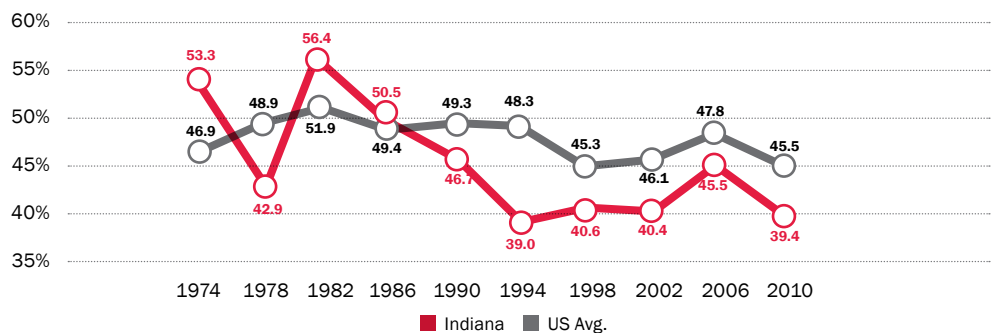
There are some positive trends in the area of voting. In 2012, Indiana ranked 37th among all states in the rate of citizens registered to vote, at 69.2%. Indiana's voter registration rate in 2010 was somewhat lower, at 61.2%, with the state ranking 43rd in the nation on this measure. In 2012, the national voter registration rate for all eligible citizens was 71.2% and 65.1% in 2010.



# 37th

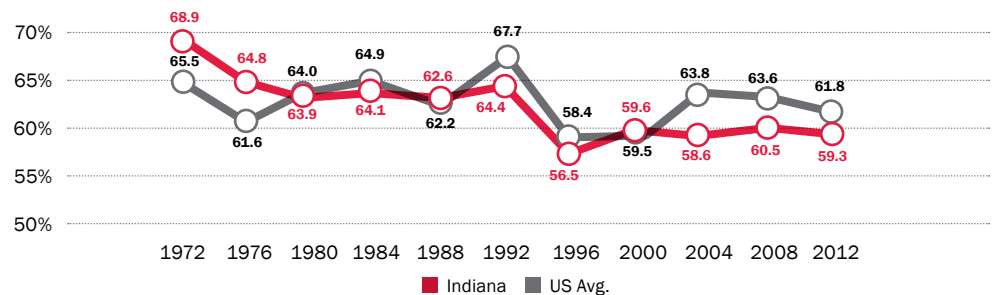
Indiana ranked 37th in voter registration during the 2012 presidential election, at 69.2%.

**Chart 2. Indiana Voter Turnout During Midterm Election Years 1972 - 2010**



Presidential year voting in Indiana in 2012 was slightly below that of the national voting rate. Approximately 59% of all Hoosiers came to the polls in 2012 elections, compared to almost 62% of all Americans. More than 65% of all suburban voters participated in the 2012 elections while 50.3% of rural voters and 59.1% of urban voters came to the polls. Hoosiers in suburban communities also registered to vote at the highest rates (74.3%) as compared to urban residents (69.5%) and rural residents (60%). In all cases but one (voting rates in suburban communities), Hoosiers in all geographic areas underperformed when compared to national voting and voter registration rates.

**Chart 3. Indiana Voter Turnout During Presidential Election Years 1972 - 2012**



In 2013, Indiana ranked 19th nationally in the percentage of eligible citizens voting for local offices, with 64.6% of residents saying that they sometimes or always voted in local elections, such as those for mayor or school board. The rate nationally in 2013 was 58.5% of citizens voting in local elections. In 2011, 58.2% of Indiana residents and 57.8% of citizens nationwide reported voting sometimes or often, in local elections. In 2011, Indiana ranked 32nd on this indicator.

## POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

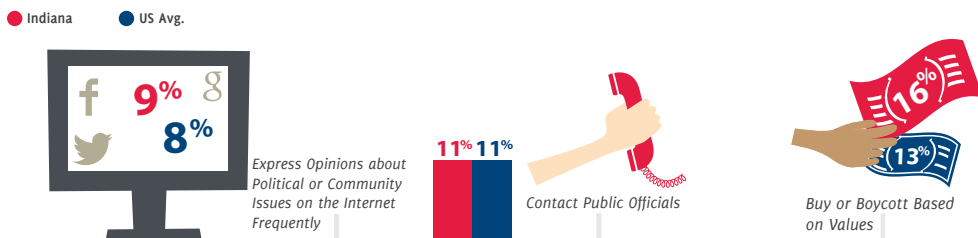
Political involvement was highest among Indiana residents living in suburban communities. Voting in local elections, boycotting or buying products/services, and using the internet to express public opinions all occurred more frequently among those living in the suburbs. In only one area of political involvement (contacting or visiting public officials) was the rate of involvement higher in urban areas than in suburban areas.

In 2013, Indiana ranked 30th in the percent of residents who reported contacting or visiting a public official at any level of government, with a rate of 11.1%, while the national rate was 10.8%. Our 2013 ranking was slightly above that of our ranking on this form of civic participation. However, in both years, the rank earned placed the state in the lower half of all states.

As a state, Indiana ranked 14th in 2013 in the percentage of people who bought or boycotted a product or service because of a socially or politically conscious view or stance. In Indiana, 15.8% of individuals engaged in this behavior, compared to 12.8% of residents nationally. In 2011, 12.1% of people nationwide engaged in this behavior, compared to 8.1% in Indiana, ranking the state 47th at that time.

While over 90% of residents, both in Indiana and around the nation, report never or infrequently using the Internet to express a public opinion, the rate of individuals in Indiana who indicate they frequently engage in such activity has risen from 5.9% in 2011 to 8.8% in 2013. Nationwide, those who report frequently using the Internet to express a public opinion has remained stable between 2011 (8.0%) and 2013 (7.9%).

### Political Involvement



Indiana ranked 30th for contacting public officials in 2013.



Indiana ranked 14th for buying or boycotting a product or service based on values in 2013.





## CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The Current Population Survey asks about people's levels of confidence in three major social institutions—corporations, the media, and the public school system.

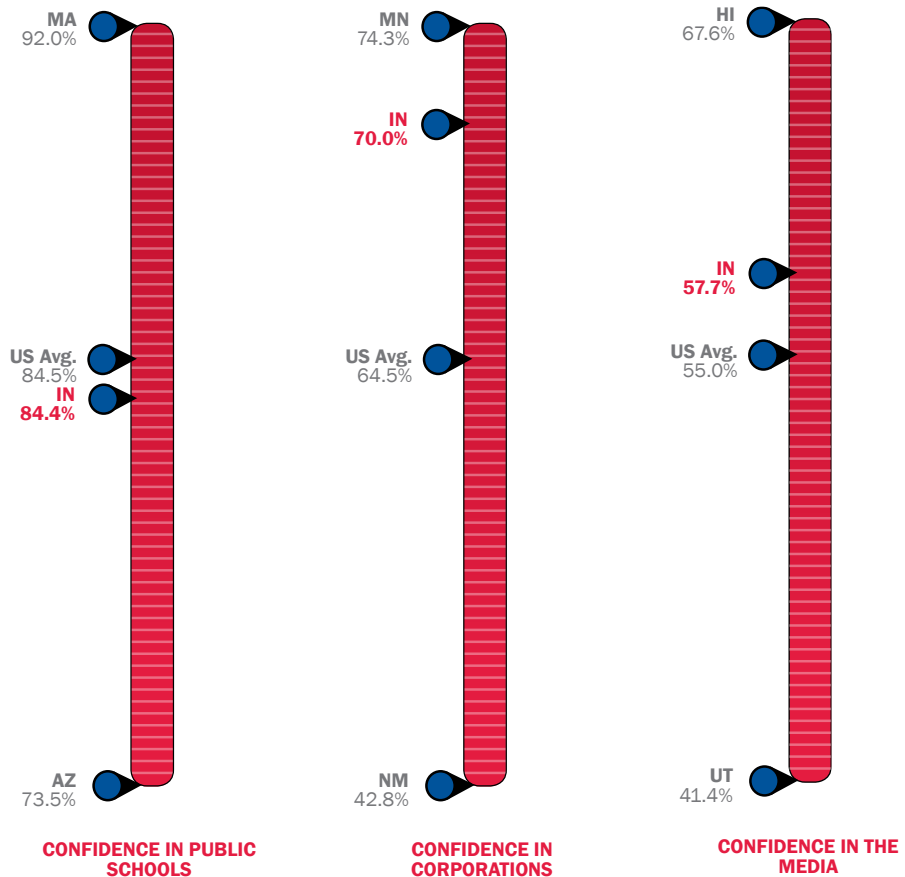
In 2013, Indiana ranked 8th in residents' confidence in corporations, with 70.0% reporting that they had some or a great deal of confidence in corporations, compared to the national average of 64.5%. The last time residents were asked about their confidence in corporations, in 2011, Indiana ranked 13th, with 66.4% of Indiana residents reporting some or a great deal of confidence. Nationwide, the rate of confidence in corporations (in 2011) was at 61.9%.

In 2013, Indiana ranked 18th in confidence in the media, with 57.7% of residents reporting that they had some or a great deal of confidence in the media, compared to the national average of 55.0%. The last time residents were asked about their confidence in the media (in 2011) Indiana ranked 22nd, with 63.6% reporting a great deal or some level of confidence. Nationally, the rate of confidence in the media was 62% in 2011.

In 2013, Indiana ranked 34th in confidence in the public school system. In Indiana, 84.4% of people reported that they had some or a great deal of confidence in the public school system compared to the 84.5% national average. In 2011, Indiana ranked 44th on this indicator with 85.9% showing this level of confidence compared to 88.0% nationwide.

# 70%

Indiana ranks 8th with 70% of residents reporting some or a great deal of confidence in corporations.



## HOW INDIANA COMPARES TO THE REST OF THE NATION

While Hoosiers perform fairly well in the social aspects of civic life such as group membership, family meals, and volunteering, there are other aspects of civic life in which Hoosiers fall behind the rest of the country.

Indiana is ranked 3rd in the nation in the number of families that eat dinner together, 26th in volunteering, and 20th in group membership. All of these rankings are improvements over those reported for 2010.

Unfortunately, Indiana ranks in the lower half of all states in other civic categories. Hoosiers rank 46th in public meeting attendance; 44th in participation in school group, neighborhood or community associations; and 47th in working with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community. It is a special concern that the percentage of Hoosiers working with neighbors has declined since 2010. This indicator of civic health is important to economic resilience. Lower rates of unemployment are associated with higher rates of working together to fix or improve our communities. Thus, when fewer of us work together, we are likely to see higher rates of unemployment.<sup>13</sup> Finally, despite an improved ranking over 2010 figures, the state still ranks in the lower half of all states (at 38th in the nation) in voting and 37th in the number of citizens registered to vote.

**Table 1. Improvements in Civic Participation 2010 to 2013**

	% (2010)	% (2013)	Ranking (2010)	Ranking (2013)
Eat dinner with a member of household frequently	90.1%	92.7%	17th	3rd
Talk about politics with friends and family frequently	21.6%	30.4%	48th	18th
Group membership	36.3%	40.2%	22nd	20th



Photo provided by the Corporation for National & Community Service

## INSIDE INDIANA: A Comparison Across Geographic Lines

Differences in civic participation can also be observed across geographic and educational lines. The most popular form of engagement can vary based on the geographic location of the community and urban, suburban, and rural areas do exhibit different patterns of civic participation. For example, those living in the rural areas of Indiana have a slightly higher rate of interaction with neighbors than their urban and suburban counterparts. Approximately 39% of rural Hoosiers report frequently talking to their neighbors, as compared to approximately 38% of urban and 34% of suburban dwellers. A larger percentage of rural Hoosiers also report doing favors for neighbors and trusting the people in their neighborhood. Specifically, 75.2% of rural Hoosiers trust their neighbors, while 41.3% and 58.8% of urban and suburban residents respectively report trusting all or most of the residents in their neighborhoods.<sup>14</sup>

Our rural communities also demonstrate a high level of confidence in public institutions, including corporations, the media, and public schools. Lower percentages of urban and suburban residents report confidence in these institutions, with the lowest percentages being reported in the urban areas. For example, 75.1% of rural residents, 68.0% of suburban residents, and 62.1% of urban residents report a “great deal or some confidence” in corporations. Similarly, 93.4% of rural, 83.1% suburban, and 77.7% of urban residents express a great deal or some confidence in public schools.<sup>15</sup>

Urban residents show the strongest commitment to participating in school groups, neighborhood, or community associations, and suburban residents register to vote and vote in larger numbers. Those living in suburban areas also have the highest percentage of residents participating in charitable giving activities.

These findings show that all Hoosier communities demonstrate our strong sense of community. We do, however, vary somewhat in how we express our commitment to our community. Rural communities’ confidence in institutions is higher than that of suburban or urban communities, but larger percentages of suburban residents register and vote in elections.

**Table 2. Civic Health Indicators: Community Strengths<sup>16</sup>**

		Urban	Suburban	Rural
VOLUNTEERING & GIVING	Attend public meeting	8.5%	6.8%	4.6%
	Work with neighbors	6.6%	5.5%	5.1%
	Charitable giving	49.5%	57.6%	47.1%
VOTING	Voting	59.1%	65.1%	50.3%
	Registration	69.5%	74.3%	60.0%
NEIGHBORLY INTERACTIONS	Trust people in your neighborhood	41.3%	58.8%	75.2%
	Frequently hear from family and friends	69.5%	66.8%	75.0%
GROUP PARTICIPATION	Participation in school group, neighborhood, or community association	17.5%	14.1%	10.4%
	Service to a civic organization	7.9%	7.8%	11.8%



## ROLE OF EDUCATION

As mentioned, in 2013 30.4% of Hoosiers reported discussing politics frequently, while approximately 28% of Hoosiers said that they do not discuss politics at all. These figures squarely place Indiana in the bottom half of all states in this category, but they also reflect a positive change when compared to 2010. In 2010, only 21.6% of Hoosiers discussed politics frequently and nearly 45% of all Hoosiers said they did not discuss politics at all. Therefore, Hoosiers appear to be engaging in political discussions more frequently today than three years ago. Those conversations on matters important to civic life support a well-informed citizenry. Efforts aimed at supporting this trend could be focused on education.

Educational achievement is important to civic participation. In 2010, only 33% of working adults (ages 25-64) in Indiana held at least a two-year degree.<sup>17</sup> In 2013, only 31.1% of working adults (25 and over) held at least a two-year degree.<sup>18</sup> Importantly, the Indiana data shows that the reported rates of civic participation are higher among residents with higher levels of education. This is true for almost every measure of civic health. So, as the level of education increases, so does the reported participation in civic activities. High school graduates almost always have higher rates of participation in civic activities than individuals with less than a high school education, with only a few exceptions where they have about the same participation rate (e.g., some volunteering and giving activities). As educational achievement increases beyond high school, we see that all civic health indicators show increasing rates of participation. Larger percentages of residents volunteer, vote, register to vote, interact with their neighbors, communicate with family and friends, get involved politically and in groups, and exhibit confidence in public institutions at higher levels of education. Of special note is the fact that higher rates of education are associated with higher rates of working with neighbors, which is also associated with lower rates of unemployment. Clearly, education and civic participation are closely linked in Indiana.

**Table 3. The Impact of Educational Attainment**

		Less than HS	HS Diploma	Some College	Bachelor's or Higher
VOLUNTEERING & GIVING	Volunteering	7.9%	18.4%	29.2%	48.4%
	Attending public meeting	3.7%	4.8%	4.4%	14.4%
	Working with neighbors	3.7%	3.6%	6.8%	10.4%
	Charitable giving (\$25 or more)	33.3%	50.8%	59.2%	73.7%
VOTING	Voting	28.5%	53.7%	66.7%	81.4%
	Registration	41.5%	64.4%	77.9%	86.9%
POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT	Vote in local elections - always or sometimes	31.8%	59.7%	70.8%	81.8%
	Contact or visit public official	2.4%	8.5%	15.2%	20.8%
	Buy or boycott a product or service	2.2%	6.5%	14.1%	21.6%
	Use the Internet to express public opinion	7.2%	7.0%	7.0%	7.7%
GROUP PARTICIPATION	Participation in at least one group	17.6%	31.3%	44.0%	54.9%
	School, neighborhood, or community association	4.2%	6.3%	16.8%	24.0%
	Service or civic association	4.0%	9.7%	11.2%	11.6%
	Sports or recreation association	1.4%	4.2%	8.3%	15.1%
	Church, synagogue, mosque, or religious institution	10.2%	18.0%	23.9%	34.3%
	Any other type of organization	0.5%	4.1%	4.1%	10.4%
	Officer or committee member	2.0%	6.8%	10.0%	22.8%

## CIVIC EDUCATION EFFORTS IN INDIANA

There are many civic education programs and initiatives currently underway in Indiana. One such program, administered by the Indiana Bar Foundation, is the *We the People* (WTP) program. This national program, created in 1987 to celebrate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, teaches students in elementary, middle, and high school about the United States Constitution and the rule of law. This longstanding program has wide spread support from many organizations and groups throughout the state and a unique competitive component that adds to the rigor of the curriculum.

The importance of this program to civic education in Indiana cannot be overstated. Recent research, conducted in the fall and winter of 2014, revealed significant gains in students' civic knowledge, disposition and skills directly related to participation in the WTP program.<sup>19</sup> The research produced several specific findings about the effectiveness of the WTP program, including:

- WTP students achieved significantly higher levels of political knowledge than students who took other civics classes. Students taking WTP as an elective had the highest knowledge scores in the study.\*
- WTP students scored significantly higher, on average, than other students on knowledge of U.S. constitutional principles, the Bill of Rights, U.S. government institutions, political parties and elections, race and politics, economic principles, and U.S. foreign policy.
- Students in classes taught by WTP teachers scored higher than those taking civics with non-WTP teachers on all of the knowledge indicators.

These results suggested that there are significant gains to be made not only when the level of education of the citizenry increases but, specifically, when civic education programs such as *We the People* are implemented in primary and secondary schools.

Of course, there are many other civic education efforts in Indiana focused on increasing knowledge, disposition and skills. Many non-profit, educational, and government groups have as their mission the promotion of a strong and engaged citizenry. The Indiana Supreme Court, for example, runs Courts in the Classroom (CITC). CITC's primary objective is to help educators, students, historians, and interested citizens learn more about Indiana's judicial branch. In addition, the Indiana Bar Foundation administers the Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council (ILYAC), the Indiana High School Mock Trial program, and the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) in Indiana. These programs are designed to engage Hoosier students in the workings of government.

Our higher education institutions are also deeply committed to our state's civic health. Hoosiers know more about the workings of Congress thanks to the important work of the Center on Congress. This Indiana University supported non-partisan, educational center has been working since 1999 to encourage civic engagement. Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) faculty and students in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) built the Center for Civic Literacy, which both studies the dynamics of citizenship and engagement and supports projects that may enrich community action. The Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics at Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) was created to study state and local politics emphasizing the importance of citizens' role in political and public processes. The Center's non-partisan efforts are devoted to helping people understand the importance of active participation in free society and the ways that politics impact our daily lives. Indiana Campus Compact (ICC) supports higher education's efforts to develop students into well-informed, engaged citizens by providing programs, services, and resources to its member institutions. ICC is a catalyst for campus and community action focused on improving people's lives through service-learning and civic engagement initiatives. On many campuses, including Indiana University Northwest, Constitution Day is observed annually on September 17th. Programming delivered on this day is focused on the U.S. Constitution and related civic health topics.

\*They answered an average of 5 more questions correctly on the total knowledge index than students taking other civics classes. WTP students answered 36 of the 62 questions correctly compared to 31 questions for non-WTP students.

## WHAT PROMOTES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN INDIANA?

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Our communities and their residents are diverse. Rural farming communities, urban manufacturing centers, and suburban residential areas all face unique challenges and bring unique strengths to our civic lives. Each type of community demonstrates areas of strong commitment to civic engagement.<sup>20</sup> While we are more connected with our families and select groups than other states, the connection to community organizations and to our neighbors could be significantly strengthened. Over the past four years our participation in this form of civic engagement has not improved. To make progress in this area, we need to gather more information regarding our neighborhood connections. We can then use that information to identify the best ways to enhance our civic lives.

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Hoosiers are unique in our social and economic heritage, but we are all committed to strengthening our communities. Undoubtedly, it is this continued collaboration and dedication to each other in communities throughout our state that provides our greatest strength. The end goals are to become a more engaged, enlightened, and active citizenry; to strengthen our economic resiliency; and, to rise to the challenge of meeting the highest standards of civic participation deserve our best efforts.

By taking what we know and building upon our strengths, while working to minimize our weaknesses, we can accomplish our goals. If there is one overriding theme to take away from this study and the previous version, it is that increased educational achievement is one of the key factors that translates to increased civic participation. The data overwhelmingly and consistently show the reported rates of civic participation are higher among residents with higher levels of education. While there may not be one magic formula for increasing civic health in Indiana, support for educational attainment for all Hoosiers at all levels and providing widespread high-quality, substantive, and diverse civic education programs and opportunities to Hoosiers of all ages would certainly be good places to focus our efforts.



Photo provided by Indiana University





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The co-authors of this report would like to express our deep appreciation to Dr. Ellen Szarleta, who as the lead author for this project, spent countless hours spearheading the creation of this report. Her expertise, leadership, and dedication were the driving forces towards the completion of this report.

The Center for Law and Civic Education at the Indiana Bar Foundation would like to thank retired Indiana Chief Justice Randall Shepard and the Indiana Supreme Court, former United States Congressman Lee Hamilton and the Center on Congress at Indiana University. Their leadership has furthered the cause of civic education and engagement in Indiana.

We would also like to thank The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) for their leadership and support of this Index and promoting citizenship nationwide.

Without the contributions and support of Indiana University Northwest and Indiana University Center for Civic Literacy, the Indiana Civic Health Index would not have been possible.

## A WORD ABOUT RECOMMENDATIONS

NCoC encourages our partners to consider how civic health data can inform dialogue and action in their communities, and to take an evidence-based approach to helping our communities and country thrive. While we encourage our partners to consider and offer specific recommendations and calls to action in our reports, we are not involved in shaping these recommendations. The opinions and recommendations expressed by our partners do not necessarily reflect those of NCoC.

This report should be a conversation-starter. The data and ideas presented here raise as many questions as they answer. We encourage government entities, community groups, business people, leaders of all kinds, and individual citizens to treat this *Report* as a first step toward building more robust civic health in Indiana.



## TECHNICAL NOTE

Unless otherwise noted, findings presented in this Report are based on CIRCLE's analysis of the Census Current Population Survey (CPS) data. Any and all errors are our own. Volunteering estimates are from CPS September Volunteering Supplement, voting estimates from 2012 November Voting and Registration Supplement, and all other civic engagement indicators, such as discussion of political information and connection to neighbors, come from the 2013 CPS Civic Engagement Supplement.

Using a probability selected sample of about 150,000 occupied households, the CPS collects monthly data on employment and demographic characteristics of the nation. Depending on the CPS supplement, the single-year Indiana CPS sample size used for this Report ranges from 1,152 (civic engagement supplement) to 1,393 (volunteer supplement), to 1,508 (voting supplement) residents from across Indiana. This sample is then weighted to representative population demographics for the state. Estimates for the volunteering indicators (e.g., volunteering, working with neighbors, making donations) are based on US residents ages 16 and older. Estimates for civic engagement and social connection indicators (e.g., favors with neighbors, discuss politics) are based on US residents ages

18 and older. Voting and registration statistics are based on US citizens who are 18 and older (eligible voters). When we examined the relationship between educational attainment and engagement, estimates are based on adults ages 25 and older, based on the assumption younger people may be completing their education.

Because we draw from multiple sources of data with varying sample sizes, we are not able to compute one margin of error for Indiana across all indicators. Any analysis that breaks down the sample into smaller groups (e.g., gender, education) will have smaller samples and therefore the margin of error will increase. Data for some indicators are pooled from multiple years (2010-2013) for a more reliable estimate when sample sizes for certain cross tabulations may have been small. Furthermore, national rankings, while useful in benchmarking, may be small in range, with one to two percentage points separating the state/district ranked first from the state/district ranked last.

It is also important that our margin of error estimates are approximate, as CPS sampling is highly complex and accurate estimation of error rates involves many parameters that are not publicly available.

# ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> [http://ncoc.net/What\\_is\\_Civic\\_Health](http://ncoc.net/What_is_Civic_Health)
- <sup>2</sup> [http://ncoc.net/What\\_is\\_Civic\\_Health](http://ncoc.net/What_is_Civic_Health)
- <sup>3</sup> The findings presented here are based on analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS) data. Estimates are from the CPS volunteering supplement, voting/registration supplement and the civic engagement supplement.
- <sup>4</sup> [http://ncoc.net/What\\_is\\_Civic\\_Health](http://ncoc.net/What_is_Civic_Health)
- <sup>5</sup> National Conference on Citizenship, et. al., "Civic Health and Unemployment: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?," 2011 Issue Brief, 2011.
- <sup>6</sup> National Conference on Citizenship, et. al., "Civic Health and Unemployment: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?," 2011 Issue Brief, 2011.
- <sup>7</sup> National Conference on Citizenship et.al., "Civic Health and Unemployment: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?," 2011 Issue Brief, 2011.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census. Web: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- <sup>9</sup> Table 1. Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990 Source: US Census Bureau. Released: Oct. 1995
- <sup>10</sup> <http://www.in.gov/ofbci/volunteer/2407.htm>
- <sup>11</sup> <http://www.in.gov/ofbci/2355.htm>
- <sup>12</sup> Accessed January 7, 2015, from <http://www.electproject.org/home>
- <sup>13</sup> This is the result controlling for all other economic factors as reported in the 2011 Issue Brief: "Civic Health and Unemployment: Can Engagement Strengthen the Economy?"
- <sup>14</sup> Urban, suburban and rural estimates for these indicators are based on a pooled average for the years 2010, 2011 and 2013.
- <sup>15</sup> Urban, suburban and rural estimates for these indicators are based on a pooled average for the years 2010, 2011 and 2013
- <sup>16</sup> The U.S. Census urban area criteria were used to determine the urban, suburban and rural geographic areas. <http://www2.census.gov/geo/docs/reference/fedreg/fedregv76n164.txt>
- <sup>17</sup> Lumina Foundation for Education. (2010). A Stronger Nation through Higher Education: How and why Americans must achieve a "big goal" for college attainment. Indianapolis, IN: Dewayne Matthews.
- <sup>18</sup> U.S. Census, Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- <sup>19</sup> Owen, Diana. "The Indiana Study on Teaching and Learning of Government," Paper prepared for presentation at the American Political Science Association Teaching and Learning Conference, Civic Engagement Track, Washington, D.C., January 15-18, 2015.
- <sup>20</sup> Table 1. Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990 Source: US Census Bureau Released: Oct. 1995



## NOTES

# CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

## State and Local Partnerships

NCoC began America's Civic Health Index in 2006 to measure the level of civic engagement and health of our democracy. In 2009, the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act directed NCoC to expand this civic health assessment in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service and the US Census Bureau.

NCoC now works with partners in more than 30 communities nationwide to use civic data to lead and inspire a public dialogue about the future of citizenship in America and to drive sustainable civic strategies.

### STATES

#### Alabama

University of Alabama  
David Mathews Center  
Auburn University

#### Arizona

Center for the Future of Arizona

#### California

California Forward  
Center for Civic Education  
Center for Individual and Institutional Renewal  
Davenport Institute

#### Colorado

Metropolitan State University of Denver  
The Civic Canopy  
Denver Metro Chamber Leadership  
Campus Compact of Mountain West  
History Colorado  
Institute on Common Good

#### Connecticut

Everyday Democracy  
Secretary of the State of Connecticut

#### District of Columbia

ServeDC

#### Florida

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship  
Bob Graham Center for Public Service  
Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

#### Georgia

GeorgiaForward  
Carl Vinson Institute of Government,  
The University of Georgia  
Georgia Family Connection Partnership

#### Illinois

Citizen Advocacy Center  
McCormick Foundation

#### Indiana

Center on Congress at Indiana University  
Hoosier State Press  
Association Foundation  
Indiana Bar Foundation  
Indiana Supreme Court  
Indiana University Northwest  
IU Center for Civic Literacy

#### Kentucky

Commonwealth of Kentucky,  
Secretary of State's Office  
Institute for Citizenship  
& Social Responsibility,  
Western Kentucky University  
Kentucky Advocates for Civic Education  
McConnell Center, University of Louisville

#### Maryland

Mannakee Circle Group  
Center for Civic Education  
Common Cause-Maryland  
Maryland Civic Literacy Commission

#### Massachusetts

Harvard Institute of Politics

#### Michigan

Michigan Nonprofit Association  
Michigan Campus Compact  
Michigan Community Service Commission  
Volunteer Centers of Michigan  
Council of Michigan Foundations  
The LEAGUE Michigan

#### Minnesota

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

#### Missouri

Missouri State University  
Park University  
Saint Louis University  
University of Missouri Kansas City  
University of Missouri Saint Louis  
Washington University

#### Nebraska

Nebraskans for Civic Reform

#### New Hampshire

Carsey Institute

#### New York

Siena College Research Institute  
New York State Commission on National and Community Service

#### North Carolina

Institute for Emerging Issues  
North Carolina Civic Education Consortium  
Center for Civic Education  
NC Center for Voter Education  
Democracy NC  
NC Campus Compact  
Western Carolina University Department of Public Policy

#### Ohio

Miami University Hamilton Center for Civic Engagement

#### Oklahoma

University of Central Oklahoma  
Oklahoma Campus Compact

#### Pennsylvania

Center for Democratic Deliberation  
National Constitution Center

#### South Carolina

University of South Carolina Upstate

#### Texas

University of Texas at San Antonio  
The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life,  
University of Texas at Austin

#### Virginia

Center for the Constitution at James Madison's Montpelier  
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

### ISSUE SPECIFIC

#### Latinos Civic Health Index

Carnegie Corporation

#### Veterans Civic Health Index

Got Your 6

#### Millennials Civic Health Index

Mobilize.org  
Harvard Institute of Politics  
CIRCLE

#### Economic Health

Knight Foundation  
Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS)  
CIRCLE

## CITIES

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### Atlanta

Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

### Chicago

McCormick Foundation

### Kansas City & Saint Louis

Missouri State University

Park University

Saint Louis University

University of Missouri Kansas City

University of Missouri Saint Louis

Washington University

### Miami

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Miami Foundation

### Pittsburgh

University of Pittsburgh

Carnegie Mellon University

### Seattle

Seattle City Club

Boeing Company

Seattle Foundation

### Twin Cities

Center for Democracy and Citizenship

Citizens League

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

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